



MISS
MAY
HANDY

AMERICAN MAGAZINE

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1899.

MAS love healed the broken heart of James Brown Potter?
Society hears that the nephew of Bishop Potter is going to marry
Miss May Handy, of Richmond, Va., one of the most beautiful girls
of the South and one of the most distinguished society belles of
America.

This event will be the climax of a drama which has excited more than two
continents, which reaches from the foundations of the social fabric to the su-
perficial area thereof known as "fashionable society."

Mr. Potter has been regarded as a life-long martyr to love and to his views
of duty as a husband, a father and a Christian.

Now, if the latest report be true, love has undone what love did. Love the
Conqueror has rescued his victim from misery and translated him into hap-
piness.

Mr. Potter first met Miss Handy at Tuxedo, where he lived, two years ago.
A sentiment of warm friendship between the two then grew up. It was
strengthened when they met again at Narragansett Pier last season and en-
joyed together the refined unconventionality of that resort. The friendship
came to an end. The wedding, it is said, will occur as soon as the peculiar at-
tendant circumstances permit.

The change of attitude on Mr. Potter's part toward his wife was indicated
last year, when it was announced that he was seeking a divorce from her
in London. So great a contradiction was this to the course he had maintained
for twelve years that his friends refused to believe it true, but yet it was.

When Mrs. Potter first proclaimed her intention of deserting her home for
the stage all her husband did was to urge her by every means in his power
to remain. The best reason he could advance was the future of their daughter
Fifi, who is now, by the way, a young woman more beautiful even than her
mother ever was. But that reason, like all others, was useless with Mrs. Potter.

Nothing on earth will restrain a woman who has set her mind on leaving
the beaten track. As she is only kept straight by instinct and convention, so
she is undeterred by reason from the opposite course.

When Mrs. Potter made her professional debut before a brilliant audience in
London and achieved a failure her husband still hoped she would return to him.
When she formed a partnership with Kyrle Bellew and sought success by sensa-
tional methods, he still did nothing to free himself from his bonds.

While his wife paraded his name in the four corners of the world he re-
mained silent and lonely, devoting himself to the education of his daughter and
to his business.

His family displayed the greatest bitterness toward Mrs. Potter. His
father, Howard Potter, the banker, who died in London two years ago, declared
in his will that it was his intention to exclude Mrs. Potter from any benefit in
his estate. Bishop Potter, the uncle of James Brown Potter, took occasion to
declare recently that he had never been in a theatre in his life.

The change in Mr. Potter's attitude toward his wife occurred, curiously
enough, when she had severed her partnership with Kyrle Bellew, had won the
admiration and the friendship of the Prince of Wales, and had become at last
a really successful actress.

Cora Urquhart is a New Orleans girl, belonging to an excellent family
which had suffered reverses. When barely twenty years of age she captivated
and married James Brown Potter, son of Howard Potter and nephew of Bishop
Potter, of the diocese of New York, in the Episcopal Church. His father was
one of the heads of the famous banking firm of Brown Brothers & Co. He
therefore belonged to one of the best-known and most honorably distinguished
families in New York.

His young wife was very pretty, with a slight, girlish figure, regular
features and a wealth of copper-colored hair, which was her most charming
feature. She has not only retained her early attractions, but has developed into
a really beautiful woman, and as such has received the approbation of the
Prince of Wales.

Young "Jimmy" Potter, as his friends call him, was in the coffee business
when he married, and was making an income, it is said, of \$7,000 or \$8,000 a year.
Having a rich father, he would never have had any difficulty in getting more
money if he needed it. In view of these facts Mrs. Potter's complaint that she
suffered the degradation of poverty on her husband's income will not excite
much sympathy. This was actually one of the reasons which she recently ad-
vanced for leaving her home.

The newly married couple had sufficient means to keep a handsome house
at Tuxedo and a charming apartment in Washington square, and to take ad-
vantage of the social relations of the husband. Mrs. Potter while going to all
kinds of social festivities, was an especially enthusiastic amateur actress and



MR JAMES BROWN POTTER'S BROKEN HEART MENDED BY NEW LOVE?

Will He Divorce "Mrs. James Brown Potter."
Who Was the Prettiest Girl of the South
Twenty Years Ago, to Marry Miss
May Handy, the Prettiest Girl
of the South To-day
?

became the leading lady of a band of fashionable young amateurs very con-
spicuous at that time.

They had a daughter, who bears the name of Anne Urquhart Potter, but is
more commonly called Fifi Potter. She was introduced to society last year.

Mrs. Potter frequented the houses of the Astors, the Vanderbilts and the
pilot of the social register. She was a guest at the most exclusive dinners, balls,
coaching parties and so forth. But all the time she grew more and more de-
voted to amateur theatricals, and less and less in love with domesticity.

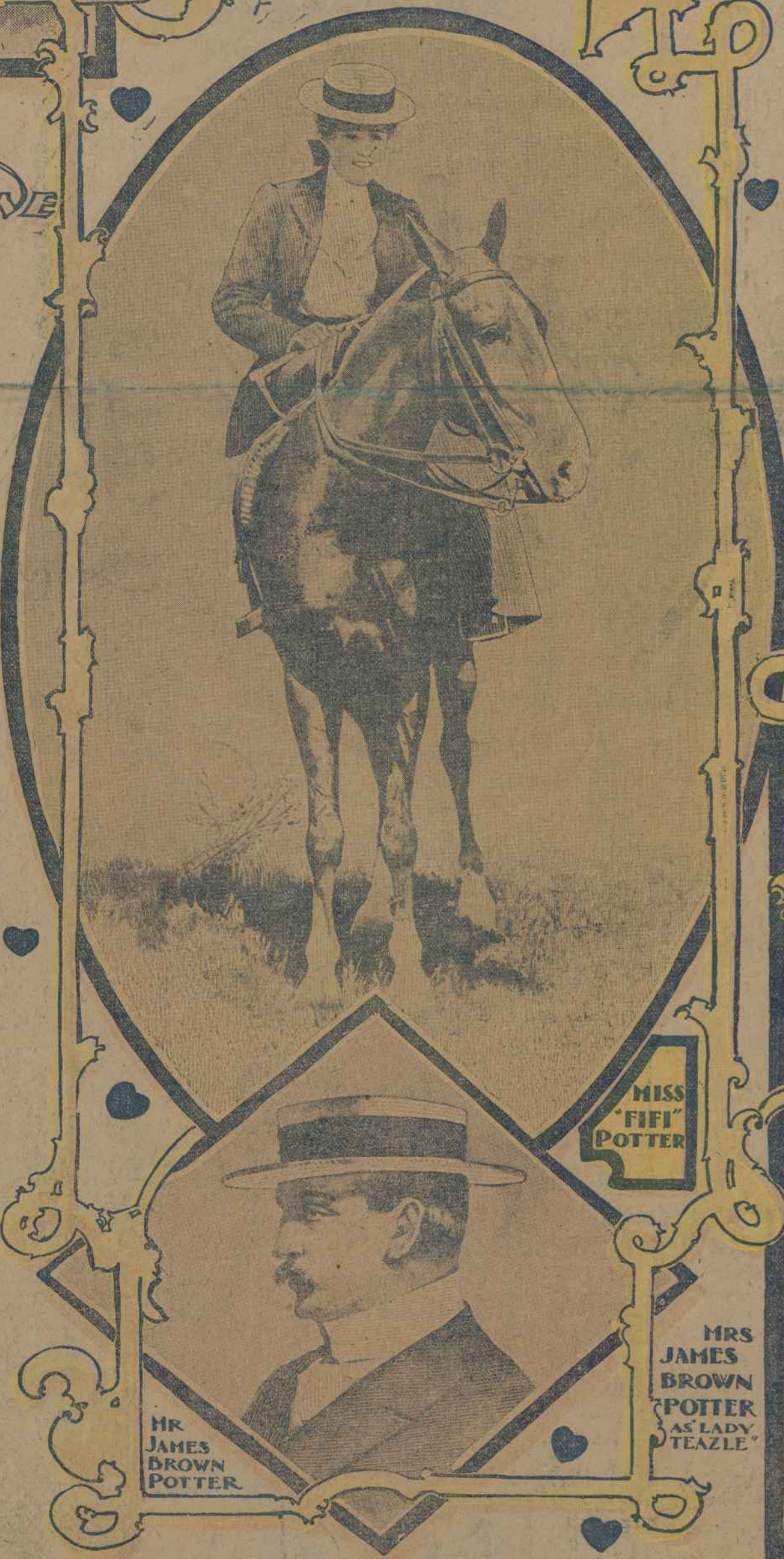
The fatal point in her career was an entertainment given in Washington by
Mr. William C. Whitney, then Secretary of the Navy. It was a very large, semi-
public affair for the benefit of a charity. Mrs. Brown Potter recited "Ostler
Joe," that stirring poem by George R. Sims, in which a stableman explains why
he took back his erring wife. The subject was by many deemed inappropriate
for a recitation by a very young matron moving in the best society, and Mrs.
Potter was severely handled at the tea tables.

A few months after that she announced to her husband and the Potter fam-
ily that she was going on the stage. They were aghast. They implored the
young mother not to break up her home, but she was obdurate. In the first
place she was thoroughly sick of the monotonous, if luxurious, surroundings of
society life, more especially because she thought herself in the position of a
poor dependent of some of the enormously wealthy people with whom she
was in daily contact. In the second place she was convinced that she had sufficient
talent as an actress to win public applause. She spelt her art with a capital A.
The glamour of the stage was upon her.

At this point she went to Europe on an ostensible pleasure trip. In com-
pany with Mrs. Paron Stevens, the late autocrat of society. While she was in
London a cablegram announced that she had signed a contract with a theatri-
cal manager of that city. She made her debut at the Haymarket Theatre on
March 29, 1887, as Anne Sylvester in Wilkie Collins's "Man and Wife." The
Prince of Wales was in a box and personally congratulated her. But she did
not make an artistic success.

She then returned to New York and made her American debut as Cleopatra.
This was one of the most sensational episodes of her life. Her recent rupture
with the Potter family brought many scandal mongers, fashionable and other

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MR
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POTTER
AS "LADY
TEAZLE"

